DENNY VERBEKE & MICHAEL VERWEIJ

NOTES ON CHRISTOPHORUS AND JOHANNES VLADEACCUS

1. Johannes Vladeraccus in praise of music: a forgotten poem
   by Denny Verbeke

In 1992, Michael Verweij published an account of the poetry of the so-called Vladeracci tres, namely Christophorus Vladeraccus and his sons Johannes and Petrus. Together with a biography of the authors, the book offers an edition of all their known poetical efforts by Christophorus and Johannes and most of Petrus' poems. Dr Verweij was able to trace four poems written by Johannes Vladeraccus: an *In laudem civitatis Silvidacensis*, two poems in praise of Adolf von Courtenbach and an *Epicedium in obitu Christophori Plantui*. Working on a study of Latin liminary texts in sixteenth-century editions of music, I came across a fifth poem in a motet collection preserved at the Conservatorio Superior de Música in Madrid. Looking into the matter after this discovery, it became clear that Henri Vanhuysl already published a transcription of this poem in 1990, but was unable to identify its author.

Johannes Vladeraccus, also known as Johannes Florager, was born around 1500 as the eldest son of Christophorus Vladeraccus and Christina Bellhaert. Johannes studied at the 's-Hertogenbosch Latin school, where

1. I wish to thank my colleague and friend Dr David Money for checking my English.
4. *Cf. Catalogue des Éditions de musique publiées à Louvain par Pierre Phalèse et ses fils* 1545-1576, Académie royale de Belgique. Mémoires de la classe des beaux-arts. Collection in-8°, 2e série, 162 (Bruxelles: Palais des Académies, 1990), p. 367. Vanhuys, due to a miscomprehension of the Latin title, ascribes the poem to a non-existing 'Iohannes Christophorus Vladeraccus filius'. Vanhuys's transcription, of which Dr Verweij had no knowledge, differs only in punctuation and the use of capitals from the edition provided in this notice.
his father taught from ca. 1561 onwards. He proved to be a good student, delivering at the age of seventeen, by heart, a public speech in praise of jurisprudence, that lasted two hours. He applied himself to music after his study in the bonae litterae, and went on to become a secretary and musician of Adrianus d’Onges, lord of Willerval. Later he appears to have worked as a phonacius (teacher of music and leader of the choir) in Oirschot, where he probably died around 1611.

The hitherto undiscovered fifth poem bears testimony to his youthful talent and inclination to music. The poem appears in the motet collection Modulorum aliquot tam sacrorum quam profanorun cum tribus vocibus et tum vocibus instrumentis, tum vocibus concentrantiam [sic] eccomodatorum, liber unus, printed at Louvain by Pierre Phails Neck in 1573. The composer of the collection is Iacobus Flori (fl. 1571-1599), whose father, Francis, was probably born in Maastricht and worked as a music copyist and composer at the Munich court from 1556 until his death in 1588. Iacobus Flori was a student of Orlandus Lassus, travelled to Italy and the Low Countries and became a member of the court chapel in Innsbruck. He obtained positions as Vizekapellmeister at Hechingen and as Kapellmeister at Salzburg, but returned to the Netherlands in 1599.

The Conservatorio Superior de Música in Madrid preserves the only existing copy of Flori’s motet edition of 1573. All three part-books (soprano, tenor and bassus) contain identical liminary texts. These texts—a dedication letter written by Iacobus Flori and a poem by Johannes Vladeracci—clearly link the edition and its composer with the Brabantine town ‘s-Hertogenbosch. According to the dedication letter, dated ‘Silveducis (i.e., ‘s-Hertogenbosch), die 26 Martii, anno 1573’,

1 Willerval is a small community in the present-day French region of Nord-Pas-de-Calais, close to Arras.
3 Karlheinz Schlesinger et al. (eds.), Einzeltakte vor 1800, Répertoire international des sources musicales (Kassel etc.: Bärenreiter, 1971-73), III (1972), 70 (nr. F118).

was staying in this town at the time of publication. It is likely that he met Christophorus Vladeracci, one of the leading figures in the cultural community of ‘s-Hertogenbosch, and his son Johannes. It may even have been the composer himself who asked Johannes (who was in his early teens) or his father to contribute a liminary poem to this motet collection.

The dedication letter, addressed to Balthazar de Bont, canon of the cathedral of ‘s-Hertogenbosch, relates the composer’s upbringing in music. Furthermore, it offers a fairly elaborate praise of the art of music and concludes with some laudatory words to the dedicatee. The poem by Johannes Vladeracci, which appears to be a school exercise in poetry composition, extends the laus musicæ. It is a traditional list of the power and positive effects of music, with a striking repetition of the word ‘musica’ as an exultation of joy and admiration:

In laudem musicæ Ioannis, Christophori Vladeracci filii, epigramma
Musica terrigena, delectat musica divos,
musica tristitiam tollit et una nigrum.
Musica turbae animis pia gaudia donat
et domat affectus musica dia malos.
Musica sollicitis animis eunus extimis auras,
musica concordi pectora voce movet.
Musica quis odio est, non sunt hic moribus aequi:
musica nam superia terricolique placet.

An epigram in praise of music, by Ioannes, son of Christophorus Vladeracci
Music delights mankind and the gods alike, only music liberates from grave cares. Music gives pious pleasure to troubled minds and godly music controls bad temperaments. Music frees vexed minds from their sorrowful burden and music moves the heart with harmonious sound. He who loathes music is not in his right mind, because music pleases gods and humans.

2. An additional note on Christophorus Vladeracci

by Michiel Verweij

Apart from a new poem by Johannes Vladeracci, additional, be it somewhat mysterious, information has come to light with regard to his father Christophorus (Gefien, 1524 - ‘s-Hertogenbosch, 1601). In the

9 Capitals and punctuation have been adapted to modern usage.
CHRISTOPHORUS AND JOHANNES VLADERACCUS

Sanctissime in Christo Pater,

Quia nostri muneri est afflictis esse solatio et persicillatibus auxilio, non potuimus quin honestum et eruditionis munus Magistrum Christophorum Flancn. Sanctiati vestrre nostris literis commendaremus, si quidem hoc eius merentur praetura cum in Catholicam Christi Ecclesiis, tum in rem publicam suas Buscodociensem officia, quibus et docendo et declamando et libellos non inductos neque delopulo Dei inutilis scribendo laborarent Divi Petri naviculam adiuvare est amnisus, siquirit plenius ex authentico capituli cathedrallis Buscodociensis testimonio est videre. Promeo Sanctitatem vestram obsidie 16 rogamus ut ea causae illius isthmi tractatus faveat propriis, quantum quidem ferat Divina Iustitiae.

Holy father in Christ,

As it is one of our duties to offer consolation to the afflicted and assistance to those in need, I urgently must recommend the honest and very learned man, Magister Christophorus Vladaraccus to Your Holiness by this letter. Both his activities with regard to the Catholic Church of Christ and to his hometown 's-Hertogenbosch earn such a recommendation, as he has tried to assist the labouring ship of Saint Peter by his teaching, his declamations and his learned works, which are of great utility to God’s people. The authentic testimony of the 's-Hertogenbosch cathedral chapter will illustrate this more completely. Therefore, I beseech Your Holiness earnestly that you should be favourable to his cause, in as much as Divine Justice allows.

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Vatican archives a letter (d.d. Roermond, 14 III 1582) by Wilhelmius Lindanus (Dordrecht, 1525 — Ghent, 1588), first bishop of Roermond,11 is preserved,12 in which ‘Magister Christophor(us) Flarcken’ is recommended on behalf of his merits for the Church and his hometown, ‘s-Hertogenbosch. The letter equally refers to the books he published. The bishop asks the pope (Gregory XIII) to decide in Vladaraccus’s favour. The letter is at times difficult to read, as the ink has faded at various places.

It is not clear to which circumstances Lindanus refers. As far as we know, Christophorus Vladaraccus never visited Rome.13 In 1582 he was one of the main teachers at the Latin school of ‘s-Hertogenbosch. Perhaps he could have been applying for promotion. In the end Christophorus would become rector of the school in 1591. The Latin school was under the chapter’s jurisdiction, but whether that justified an appeal to the pope himself remains to be seen, as the pope actually had no influence or control over the school. Moreover, ‘s-Hertogenbosch was an episcopal see itself, and, therefore, not under Lindanus’s jurisdiction. On the other hand, Lindanus and Christophorus probably met in Louvain as they both attended the Collegium Trilingue there at the same time: in that way, Lindanus was a likely candidate for Christophorus to turn to. As Lindanus mentions a testimony by the ‘s-Hertogenbosch chapter, in which Vladaraccus was recommended as well, it seems out of the question that he had difficulties with his employers.

Just as it is not clear to what matter this letter refers, the circumstances of its presentation remain an enigma. It could have been presented by a procurator or (theoretically) by Christophorus himself: there is nothing in the document either for or against it. The letter is preserved in a collection of letters by bishops, not in a specific file on a particular question, and no other documents bearing on this matter have so far come to light.

I add an edition of the paragraph bearing on Christophorus (the complete first paragraph of the letter, the latter part is taken up with Lindanus’s own writings against the Protestants, especially the Concordia discorda, edited in Cologne in 1582).14

12 Archivio Segreto Vaticano, Segr. Stato, Vescovi e Prelati, 10, P. 81, r°v°. I like to thank Bruno Boutie for his transcription of this document.
13 A distinct relative of Christophorus, Johannes Vladaraccus de Buscoduci, was buried in Rome in the church of Santa Maria dell’Anima in 1445; cf. Archivio S. Maria dell’Anima, Torqueroch, P. 1v°. See on this church: Michiel Verweij, De Santa Maria def. ‘Anima te Rome. Bezoekregistras (Rotterdam: Denker, 2003).
14 Based on the transcription by B. Boutie. Punctuation has been adapted to modern usage. Standard abbreviations have been solved without further notice.